News release

New £215 million aviation deal

15 April 2003

The Met Office this week signed its biggest ever single sales contract. The contract, with the Civil Aviation Authority, is worth £215 million over the next nine years. It represents long-term commitment from the CAA for the Met Office to provide meteorological services to the UK civil aviation community.

The tragic events of 11 September placed great pressure on the global aviation community and, as a consequence, on all their suppliers. In the UK this led to the CAA and Met Office exploring together new arrangements that would enable met. service provision to be more responsive to the changing needs of the aviation community.

These new arrangements place the UK and the Met Office in an excellent position to respond to the opportunities provided by the new European Single Sky programme legislation. They reflect the high level of confidence the CAA has in the Met Office's ability to be responsive to the needs of the customer, in terms of quality and price.

As one of the only two World Area Forecast Centres, the other being Washington, the Met Office is already the main provider of meteorological services to aviation for Europe above 24,000 ft. Below 24,000 ft the services are provided by each state's own national met. service.

Dave Underwood, the Met Office's Head of Civil Aviation, said: "This new arrangement gives us a firm basis from which to provide services to other national airspaces should the opportunity arise. This is a very significant, groundbreaking deal for the Met Office because it shows long-term commitment from the aviation community. It is also an excellent deal for the aviation community because we are offering them greater flexibility to meet the ever-changing needs of their business."

Notes: The Single Sky programme is European legislation that comes into play in 2004. It calls upon all the European states to ensure that all air navigation providers co-operate to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

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